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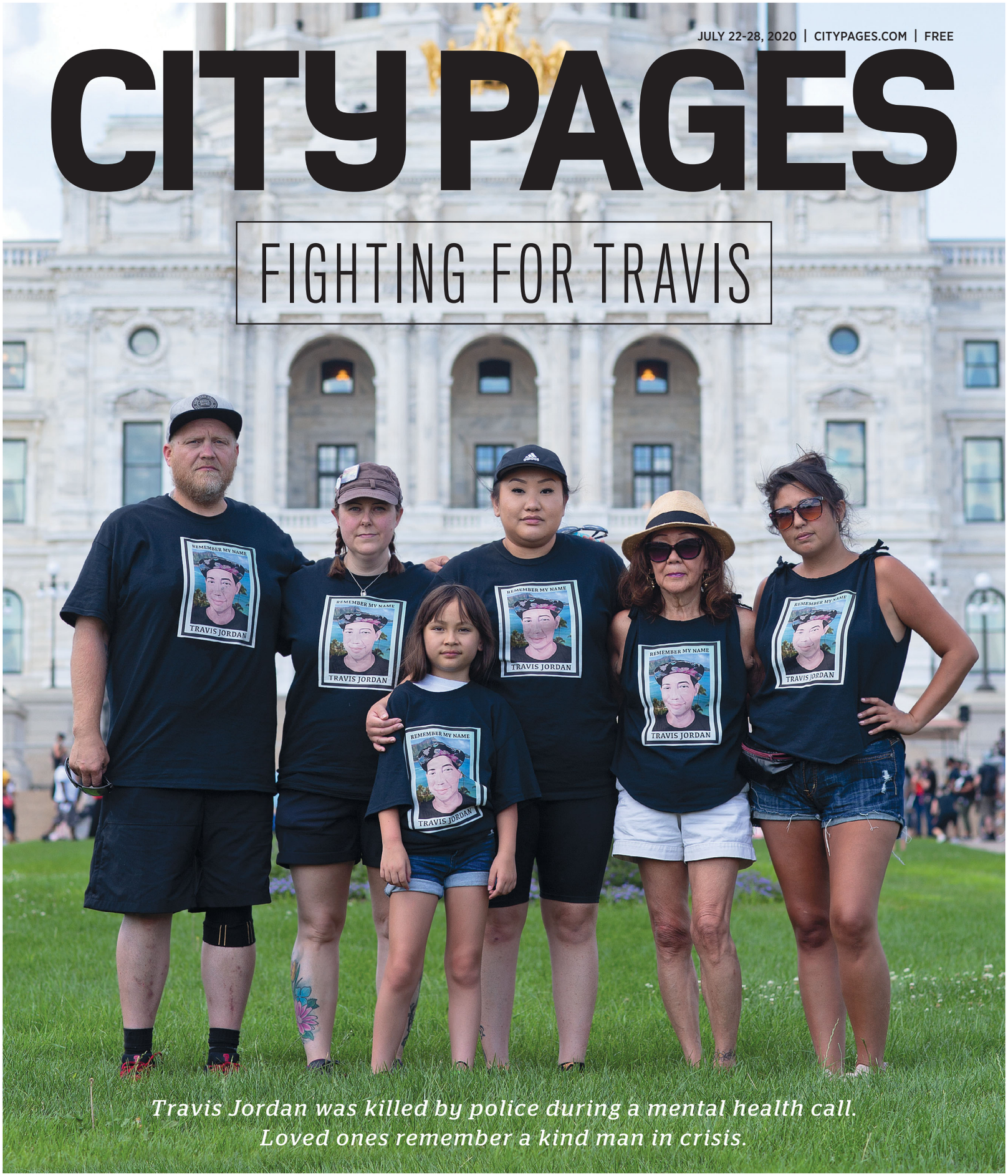

Travis Jordan was killed by police during a mental health call. Loved ones remember a kind man in crisis.

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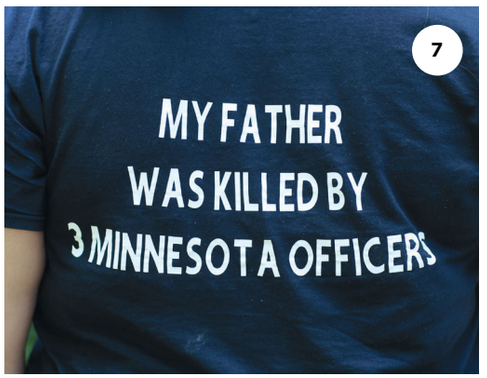

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Editorial

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STAFF WRITERS Susan Du, Hannah Jones
COPY EDITOR Bridgette Reinsmoen
PROOFREADER Bryan Miller
CLUBS EDITOR Erik Thompson

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jerard Fagerberg, Jay Gabler, Tony Libera, Michael Madden, Erica Rivera, Sheila Regan

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Amy Gee, Alma Guzman, Lucy Hawthorne, Samson Melkamu, Shelly Mosman, Bobby Rogers, Tony Nelson, Colin Michael Simmons

Art

ART DIRECTOR Emily Utne
LAYOUT EDITOR Shelby Lano

Production

DESIGN MANAGER Maria Grzywa

Publisher

Mary Erickson

Advertising

SALES DIRECTOR Leah Parkinson
SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Leah Carson, Kevin Lenhart, Brian Thunberg
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Frankie Ellingson, Ashley Farlow, Luke Gildemeister, Marie Iannazzo, Jacob Johnston
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Mike Yanke
ACCOUNT MANAGERS
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CP Digital

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Kelly Java
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR Alison King

Marketing and Promotions

MARKETING DIRECTOR Holly Hunt
MARKETING COORDINATOR
Emma Engeldinger

Business and Administration

FINANCE MANAGER Bernadette Botoshe
STAFF ACCOUNTANT Du Nguyen Ho

City Pages

650 3rd Avenue South, Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488
PHONE 612.375.1015 **FAX** 612.372.3737
E-MAIL adinfo@citypages.com
CITY PAGES ONLINE www.citypages.com
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HITTING THE STREETS NEXT WEEK!

JULY 29, 2020

To celebrate the issue hitting the stands, City Pages is hosting a virtual Best of the Twin Cities event starting August 5, 2020.

THE SHORTLIST

Jim Hagedorn, fiscal conservative, spent $570,000 of tax-payer money in three months *at citypages.com*

GLEN STUBBE, STAR TRIBUNE

THE STAT SHEET

8.6%

Minnesota's unemployment rate in June, a slight drop from its peak of 9.9%

86%

Drop in daily trips taken by solo drivers who pay tolls at MnPass lanes due to coronavirus slowdown

40,000

Single-day total of new COVID cases in India, which could soon have the second-largest caseload to the U.S.

7,500

Mammograms at Allina Health delayed by pandemic between March and May

> **"I've seen this movie. The license plate will say 'Shibby' when he finds it."**

—Reader Matthew Martin responds to "Toyota owner left car 'somewhere' in (or near?) Minneapolis after wild night" at citypages.com.

UNMASKING CONTROVERSY

BY NOW, epidemiologists agree: We should all be wearing masks to stop the spread of COVID-19. But because everything is problematic to some degree, our personal protective equipment likely is, too. A recent New York Times visual analysis found that the Chinese government is using forced labor to make pandemic PPE. It seems the country is using Uighur workers from a "contentious" government program to manufacture the equipment—most of which has been for domestic use, though the Times tracked their supply chains and found at least some has been exported globally.

POPULAR STORIES
AT CITYPAGES.COM

COVID just closed six local bars and restaurants... in 24 hours

Restaurant says it banned **OBNOXIOUS TRUMP GUY** who broke coronavirus rules

Mind-blowing Minneapolis **ZILLOW LISTING** uses only fisheye lens photos

TOYOTA OWNER left car 'somewhere' in (or near?) Minneapolis after wild night

Minneapolis parks board to vote on **LEGALIZING TOPLESSNESS**

NORTHERN VANDALS

Couple caught taking down Black Lives Matter sign in Grand Marais

As June rolled into July, Andy DeLisi, the owner of Big Bear Lodge out in Grand Marais, discovered the Black Lives Matter signs at the edge of his property had gone missing.

He says he was disappointed, if not surprised, that whoever took his signs couldn't have "just rolled on by and left the sign alone. If everyone is about freedom of speech, then let it be so."

The next time around, DeLisi planned ahead. He put out another sign and set up a security camera. Last Tuesday evening, the feed captured two people meddling with it, and a pale pink car parked nearby, emblazoned "Mary Kay."

DeLisi has no idea whether they were the same folks who messed with his other signs, but they clearly didn't think much of this one. He says they picked it up and dumped it in a nearby ditch. The next day, he selected a few stills from the feed and called up the Cook County Sheriff's Office.

"Andrew told me he just wanted the people talked to about going on other people's property and moving things that aren't theirs," a report by a Cook County deputy reads. A little research revealed that the pale pink cars are associated with high-up Mary Kay sales reps. Other than that, the department didn't have much to go on.

But DeLisi also posted the photos on Facebook, where they blew up and were reposted on Twitter. A few commenters said they recognized the pair as Tom and Linda Bergerson from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who were staying at an area resort.

According to the report, the deputy found the car and confirmed it belonged to a "Tom and Linda." Then the deputy approached them for a quick chat.

"I told them I had photos of them moving a Black Lives Matter sign and asked what they were doing," the report says. Linda told the deputy she'd gone to talk to DeLisi, but he hadn't been there at the time, "so they moved the sign."

"She told me she wanted to discuss the political subject and wanted to send a message," the report says.

The deputy reportedly reminded Linda that the sign "was not her property" and she should leave it alone or risk prosecution, and the couple allegedly agreed not to go back. The deputy reported back to DeLisi, and just like that, the case was pretty much closed.

Well, almost. Despite Linda reportedly wanting to "send a message," the pair weren't exactly pleased with their newfound attention. Later that afternoon, the report says, Tom called up the deputy and told him someone "from the radio" had called asking about the sign. He didn't want to talk to the radio, he said.

"I told him people are very sensitive to this topic right now, and word spreads fast up here," the deputy wrote. He advised him to call 911 if he had an emergency, but if he didn't want to talk, he could block the numbers. DeLisi says he hasn't heard from Tom or Linda since, and doesn't expect to.

FACEBOOK

"We know there are folks that don't necessarily agree with the sentiment [of Black Lives Matter], and we get a lot of travelers on the scenic byways," he says. "But here, it seems, most of the folks are pretty solid." —HANNAH JONES

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FIGHTING FOR TRAVIS

Travis Jordan was killed by police during a mental health call. Loved ones remember a kind man in crisis.

BY

CAROLINE THOMPSON

Travis Jordan was having a bad day.

It was Friday, November 9, 2018. In north Minneapolis, the 36-year-old Jordan was alone in his house, beginning a dangerous spiral into the worst depressive episode of his life.

Jordan wouldn't survive to see November 10, and reports about his death in the weeks that followed would make it seem inevitable—a dangerous, broken man who decided to commit suicide at the hands of the police. Until George Floyd's death, his was another name on a long list of dead Black, brown, and Indigenous men killed by Minnesota officers who claimed they felt too threatened by their encounters to use anything but deadly force.

But since the police abolition movement erupted in Minneapolis this spring, the people who loved Jordan have been working tirelessly to shift his legacy from perpetrator to victim.

After all, the eight bullets fired at him came from the barrel of a gun in another man's hand. Is that a suicide?

His family doesn't think so.

A native of Hawaii, Jordan had been living on the same north Minneapolis block since 2011, when he packed up his island life and moved to be closer to his mother and cousin and aunt in the bitter, blustering cold of the north. Once a talented surfer, he was left with chronic pain and an addiction to OxyContin after an accident on the water. During those first few months in the snow, Jordan decided to quit Oxy cold turkey. His mother and aunt cared for him around the clock as the withdrawal made him sweat, shake, vomit, and cry. His cousin Malia Gahler Nzara said it was one of the most horrific things they'd ever witnessed, but he made it through that fight, emerging clean and with a renewed purpose. He never went back to Oxy.

Jordan grew up in the restaurant industry. His mother, Flo Ching, raised him and his brother on her own. She worked at a resort on Oahu, and when Jordan was a child, her co-workers were like a second family to him. A bright, artistic child, he excelled in elementary and middle school and made friends easily. He loved to paint and draw

EMILY UTNE

Gabriel Black Elk's brother Paul Castaway was killed by Denver police in 2015 during a schizophrenic episode.

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EMILY UTNE

Left: Travis Jordan. Top: His friends and family. From left: Paul Johnson, Allison Reinke, Sophia Jones, Taren Vang, Flo Ching, Malia Gahler Nzara.

and had a knack for graffiti designs, getting in trouble a few times in high school for tagging elaborate, colorful murals on various buildings around town. He adored animals, often sneaking pets into the house under his mother's nose and doting on them secretly.

After graduating from high school, Jordan worked his way up from busboy to mixologist and sommelier. He continued this work in Minneapolis, taking jobs at The Exchange nightclub and The Union, where he met his roommate, Paul Johnson. His warm demeanor made him a favorite of customers, and he was generous with the money he made, buying groceries for friends, catering other people's parties on his own dime. Every time he passed a panhandler, he'd empty his wallet and ask what else they needed.

In 2016, then 26-year-old Taren Vang and a friend sat down at Jordan's bar after a night of clubbing. He was instantly entranced by Vang, and for the next two years they embarked on a casual flirtation—long conversations over the bar on weekends and "free" drinks that, she later found out, he was paying for out of his own pocket. She gave him her number and they texted on and off. In early 2018, she got a call from Jordan. He asked her if she wanted a cat.

"A cat?" she said, incredulous.

A scrawny orange tabby had followed him home from work, and he was looking to find it a good home. Vang wasn't up for a cat, but she was intrigued by his altruism.

That February, Jordan called again, this time to ask Vang out. He meticulously planned every moment of their first date, taking her to Manny's and showering her with compliments. After three more successful dates, he asked Vang to be his girlfriend.

The two quickly fell into a comfortable, cozy, homebody routine. Save for the two weeks Vang spent on vacation in Europe over the summer of 2018, they saw each other every day. On weekends, Vang would sleep late and wake up to elaborate breakfast creations waiting for her in the kitchen. They cooked dinner together, cuddled with his roommates' three cats and 13-year-old, half-paralyzed basset hound, who Jordan fawned over—waking up every morning to help her, spending hours next to her on the floor making her sure she felt loved and special at the end of her life.

While things were good between them, Vang began to notice a persistent sadness beneath Jordan's upbeat exterior. Jordan had been diagnosed as bipolar and had tried medication a few times. But he didn't like the way it made him feel, so for the past few years, he had been managing his mental health on his own. Like so many suffering from clinical depression and bipolar disorder, he hid his pain behind humor and substances. He often drank to excess, becoming sad, angry, and, at times, belligerent.

Jordan's roommate Johnson had also been diagnosed as bipolar, and when Jordan moved in with him in May, 2018, was also in the process of quitting alcohol.

"I understand all too well how difficult it can be to deal with mental illness and addiction at the same time," said Johnson, "so there were things I was trying to have for Travis in this house that would keep him safe from himself, provide him shelter from the world."

Johnson and his wife, Allison Reinke, banned drinking at the house, and did their best to make themselves available for Jordan whenever he needed support. And while

EMILY UTNE

Amity Dimock and her husband, Encarnacion Garcia. Dimock's 21-year-old son, Kobe Heisler, was killed by Brooklyn Center police last year.

Vang says the drinking got better, the sadness remained. Some days Jordan couldn't eat, drink, or get out of bed, lost in his own interior pain. On days like that, Vang would drive over with a plate of food, sit him up in bed, and feed him like a child.

"You're so sad but you love me so much," she would think. "I can go through this with you. I can help you. We can do this together."

In the months leading up to November 9, Jordan was in and out of the hospital with severe pancreatitis, a condition often caused or exacerbated by alcohol abuse. While in the hospital, he developed a blood clot that required near-constant medical surveillance. Vang would go with him to doctors appointments and sit with him while he underwent painful tests.

Johnson and Vang say the stress of Jordan's medical problems took a toll on his mental health, making his depression worse than ever. On November 8, after one such appointment, Vang alternated putting hot and cold packs on Jordan's aching body until he suggested she head home. She reminded him of their plans for the weekend: Her family was having a celebration for the Hmong New Year, and Vang had purchased matching outfits for them to wear to the party.

"He was really excited about that," she said. "Family meant everything to him."

But the next afternoon, Jordan began sending Vang concerning text messages. A music video containing graphic depictions of suicide, a goodbye note. He wasn't making sense, and he wouldn't listen to reason. He wanted to die, he said.

At the time, Vang was taking care of her mother, who she couldn't leave unattended. Desperate, she called Johnson and Nzara, who lived across the street, but both were at work. A social worker Vang knew suggested she call the non-emergency police line.

"They will be able to get there faster than we can," said her friend.

Vang took the advice. She called 311 and told them her boyfriend was threatening suicide, but was directed to 911. A few minutes later, her father arrived to watch her mother and Vang jumped in her car, speeding from East St. Paul to Jordan's home in Minneapolis.

In 2017, Minneapolis's Third and Fifth Police Precincts embarked upon a "co-responder" pilot program for mental health calls. The program paired licensed social workers with officers to respond to all 911 calls relating to a mental health episode. While most police departments label calls for assault, domestic abuse, gunshots, and people in mental health crises as "Priority 1" calls that require an armed police response, Minneapolis precincts with co-responder programs take mental health out of the mix. Instead, these are flagged in the system as calls from or for "Emotionally Disturbed Persons," or EDPs.

The social worker, who is unarmed and well-versed in deescalation tactics, is the primary point of contact for the EDP. The officer, though armed, is dressed in plain clothes and follows the lead of their partner. The pair asks gentle questions, supporting the person in distress and often enlisting the help of friends, family members, or other trusted figures to get them whatever help they need. The vast majority of EDP calls relate to suicidal ideation.

According to data provided to MinnPost from the Minneapolis Police Department, between the fall of 2017 and the fall of 2018, co-responders handled 985 EDP calls in the Third and Fifth Precincts. Of those, 264 people were calmed down by the social worker at the scene, and were able to stay at their home or workplace. Another 189 were safely transported to a hospital or mental health facility, and 198 required no assistance or were gone before co-responders showed up. There were no arrests made,

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and no police-involved shootings or deaths in any of those cases.

A 2015 report by the Treatment Advocacy Center found that people with untreated mental illness are 16 times more likely to be killed by law enforcement, and that one in four victims of fatal police violence were dealing with mental illness.

"We expect our police officers to wear too many hats and to be professionals and experts in areas where they weren't trained to be," says Amity Dimock, whose 21-year-old autistic son, Kobe Dimock-Heisler, was shot and killed by Brooklyn Center police in 2019 after he threatened to hurt himself. He lived with his grandparents, who initially called 911 for assistance but were able to calm him down on their own. Although Dimock says Kobe's grandfather called back to say police were no longer needed, they came anyway, and as a result, Dimock-Heisler's life was taken.

While she says co-responder programs are "better than nothing," Dimock believes any police presence on the scene of a mental health crisis is a recipe for disaster.

"In a mental health crisis or addiction situation, I don't think it should be armed police officers who respond," she said. "It should be a trained mental health professional. Police should be reserved for violent crimes. I am positive my son would be alive if that had been who responded."

Creating a separate, unarmed crisis response team specifically for mental health calls has been a success in many places around the country and world, including Stockholm, Sweden; Oakland, California; and Eugene, Oregon, where for years, a group called CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Street) has been responding to all EDP calls in the area. In 2019, CAHOOTS workers, not armed police, responded to 24,000 mental health crises in Eugene, about 20 percent of all calls to 911 that year.

Unfortunately for Jordan, who lived in north Minneapolis's Fourth Precinct, the city's co-responder program had yet to be implemented in his area.

Vang goes back to the moment she made the call all the time in her head.

"I expected an ambulance to come and convince him to get treatment at the hospital," she said. "I thought someone could come to save his life, calm him down and take him somewhere safe where he could get into a better frame of mind. I thought they would send someone who could help him come back to his senses."

You can watch the bodycam footage of Jordan's encounter with MPD Officers Ryan Keyes and Neal Walsh, who responded to Vang's call, on YouTube. At the time, Keyes and Walsh were rookie cops, on the force less than 11 months each.

The footage starts in the car. Keyes is driving, and the two pull up to Jordan's home just after 2 p.m. They get out of the car, walking gingerly over the crunchy white layer of snow covering Jordan's yard, and knock on his front door. No one answers, so they walk to the back yard and peer into a window. Jordan is in the kitchen. They knock, asking him to come outside, then walk back to the front porch to see if he'll comply. He doesn't. With the winter wind whistling through the side yard, Keyes walks back to the kitchen window and knocks again.

EMILY UTNE

Diamond Reynolds's boyfriend, Philando Castile, was killed by a St. Anthony police officer in 2016.

Jordan opens the window and yells out: "What?"

"Can you come to the front door?"

"Fuck you," Jordan says, his voice cracking with emotion.

"What's your name?" asks Officer Keyes.

"It doesn't fucking matter," Jordan cries. "Fuck you. Fuck both you motherfuckers."

He shuts the window.

"Well, that's him," says Officer Keyes to Officer Walsh, who suggests they call for backup.

A neighbor stops to see what's happening, and they ask him whether there is a dog in the house. The neighbor says yes, there's a dog, maybe two? One is massive and very old, he says.

The cops stand around aimlessly for a few moments, until Jordan appears in the window on the screened-in front porch.

"Let's do this," he screams out the front door. "For real, let's do this!"

"Come here dude."

"Let's do this!" Jordan sobs.

Through the window, the officers notice a kitchen knife in Jordan's hand.

"He's got a knife dude, he's got a knife."

With Jordan still inside on the porch, the officers draw their guns.

"Let's do this!" he screams again.

The officers back up, their guns pointed at Jordan's figure in the door.

"Put the knife down. Drop the knife dude. Drop the knife."

"FUCK YOU. Come on!!! Let's do this."

"Drop the knife dude, I do not want to do this."

"COME ON," screams Jordan, his voice hoarse and raw. "FUCKING DO IT."

Still holding the knife, Jordan stumbles out the front door. He takes four, maybe five, steps toward them before both officers open fire. Eight shots in quick succession. The noise reverberates around the deserted winter street. Jordan crumbles as the bullets hit his chest, and the officers run over to him as he lies moaning on the sidewalk. They roughly throw him onto his stomach and handcuff him as blood seeps out of his midsection onto the snowy ground.

"I'm sorry," he cries. "I'm sorry."

Jordan was already dead by the time Vang pulled up to the block, now swarming with police activity.

Shaking, Vang parked and identified herself, and was immediately shuttled into the back of a police car next to Johnson, who had arrived a few minutes prior. The two sat together for hours, pleading with the police on the scene to tell them what happened.

"There was one cop in the car with us, but he wouldn't give us any information," said Vang. "He kept telling us he didn't know and trying to make small talk with Paul about his business. So we sat there looking online for anything, refreshing the front page of all the big news outlets over and over, hoping to see that he was OK."

When Nzara arrived, police wouldn't allow her to cross their tape to get into her home, which sat kitty-corner from Johnson and Jordan's. She asked why there were so many police on the scene.

"They told me the reason there was such a large police presence was because there had been so many calls involving him in the past," said Nzara. "That was not true at all. When I asked if he was still alive, they told me he was still in the house being talked down. That wasn't true either. He was already dead at the hospital."

After several hours in the back of the car, Johnson and Vang were asked to come to the station, where they were separated and subjected to a long interview process with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), which investigates police-involved deaths.

Jordan had now been dead for nearly six hours. Johnson and Vang still didn't know. Instead, they say the BCA agents asked them pointed questions: Wasn't he disturbed? Wasn't he violent? Didn't he want to die at the hands of the police?

"I caught on right away," said Johnson. "They were trying to coax out of me a narrative that fit the story they wanted to tell. Trying to paint a picture of someone who was a problem, not someone who needed help. I wouldn't give that to them. Because it wasn't true."

Not until the interviews concluded was either party informed of Jordan's death. Wracked with grief, they left the station nearly 12 hours after the shooting, and drove in numb silence to Nzara's, where Jordan's mother, aunt, and uncle were waiting.

On July 12, 2020, Vang, Johnson, Reinke, Nzara, and other members of Jordan's friends and family marched down University Avenue in St. Paul, with more than 100 families from around the country who also lost loved ones to police violence. Wearing masks and shirts depicting Jordan's name and face, they led a block-long swarm of protesters who came in support of the National Mother's March Against Police Violence.

The march, along with a healing workshop for families that took place at a church in Bloomington the day before, was organized primarily by Ashley Quinones and Toshira Garraway, who lead the Justice Squad and Families Supporting Families Against Police Violence (FSFAPV), respectively. Quinones and Garraway lost their partners to police violence 10 years apart, and have been fighting together for justice since Quinones's husband, Brian Quinones, was killed by Richfield police last year.

With the help of the community, Quinones and Garraway raised enough money to fly out families from around the country to join their Mother's March weekend.

In attendance were family members of Breonna Taylor, Ahmed Aubrey, George Floyd, and other victims of police killings. Sandy Guardiola from New York, killed in her bed during a wellness check. Atatiana Jefferson from Texas, shot through the window of her house while babysitting her young nephew. Maricio Barron, shot by police after being hit by a car on the freeway in Irvine, California. Jonathon Tubby from Wisconsin, shot while sitting handcuffed in the back of a cop car.

George Washington Senior. Eric Rivera. Vincent Velasquez. Dale Graham. Lionel

EMILY UTNE

Matilda Smith's son, Jaffort Smith, was shot by four St. Paul police officers in 2016.

Antione Lewis. Tyrone West. Paul Castaway. So many different names with the same story: an unjust death, an evasive response from police, a push for answers, a tangled web of lies. As the protesters chanted as they marched to the State capitol, for these families, there is "no justice, no peace."

Since Jordan's death, this community has been a lifeline for Vang. Gabriel Black Elk from the group Native Lives Matter reached out to her just days after Jordan was killed. While she was never an activist, after Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman announced that no charges would be filed in Jordan's death she began to attend protests and vigils for other victims of police violence. While things went on pause for a few months when the pandemic began in March, the movement was electrified by the death of George Floyd.

At a protest outside of Freeman's home on May 27, Vang spoke publicly about Jordan in front of a crowd of hundreds. Today, her Google calendar is packed with several community events every week: a vigil, a protest, a Zoom appointment with Gov. Tim Walz.

Vang's compatriots in Justice Squad and FSFAPV are calling for all cases of police-involved killings in the United States to be reopened and reexamined, and they have the attention of some powerful allies. In a meeting at the Minneapolis Club with Attorney General Keith Ellison on Tuesday, July 14, Vang, Quinones, Garraway, and several other mothers, wives, stepfathers, daughters, and cousins of those who were killed by Minnesota police officers spoke at length about their struggle for justice.

Ellison listened carefully, responding with empathy, self-deprecating humor, and helpful legal advice. Though the activism of this community has resulted in eight bills regarding police reform being pushed through the Minnesota House of Representatives, several key measures have stalled in the Republican-controlled Senate.

"That's unfortunate, because it's good policy that would help everybody, and ultimately make our system more transparent and more accountable," said Johnathon McClellan, a criminal justice reform activist, law student, and former firefighter and elected delegate for Bernie Sanders who helped to draft the bills now being stonewalled. If passed, the bills would ensure families get access to unredacted bodycam footage within 48 hours of a police critical incident, mandate that officers be trained in recognizing and responding to individuals on the autism spectrum, end the three-year statute of limitations for wrongful death suits, end no-knock warrants, and establish a statewide co-responder program for EDP calls.

"[The Republicans] haven't talked to these families, they're trying to pacify their base, said McClellan. "But after the death of George Floyd, Minnesota is ground zero for this uprising. The fact that other states around the country are passing legislation in response to this but Minnesota has not is a disgrace of the utmost. They should be ashamed of themselves."

If these bills had been law on that overcast November day in 2018, would Jordan still be alive? Would the presence of a trained social worker have been enough to break him out of his own mind? The people who love him will never know for sure, but they think it's a question worth asking.

"When I watch the video, all I can think is: Why did they do that? What are they doing? To me, they did 72 things wrong," said Nzara.

"Minnesota has no death penalty, so why was he killed for being sad?" asks Johnson. "I could go out and murder a hundred people in Minnesota, and I couldn't be sentenced to death. Yet continually, the police are being put in charge of people's lives. And when people like Travis are experiencing the worst day of their life, when the police show up without training, without empathy for the neighborhood and communities they serve, they are only there to make it worse."

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DAIRY'S HEIR APPARENT

How an apprentice butter sculptor is preserving fair tradition

BY SARAH BRUMBLE

According to the American Butter Institute, the origins of butter can be traced back to 10,000 years ago, when humans first began domesticating animals. Appearing more than 5,000 years before jewelry made of gold, butter might just be civilization's first and most enduring hallmark of decadence.

The latest proof comes from the 2020 Minnesota State Fair. Yes, we know it's been canceled for just the sixth time in its storied history. Still, at least one unlikely tradition will endure despite so many upheavals surrounding it: sculpting 90-pound blocks of butter to resemble 10 young women from dairy farms statewide, one of whom will be crowned the 67th annual Princess Kay of the Milky Way.

Midwest Dairy, the multi-state organization that chooses each year's princess, will rely on local sculptor Gerard ("Gerry") Kulzer to deliver on this touchstone of "normalcy." The pandemic is preventing legendary butter sculptor Linda Christensen from making her annual pilgrimage from California to whittle 'bergs of butter into princess busts before fairgoers' eyes. Instead, she'll be "virtually participating," guiding Kulzer from afar as her apprentice steps up during this moment of need.

When not imbuing butter with lifelike depths, Kulzer lives in Litchfield and divides his time between teaching, working as a freelance sculptor and presenting live workshops, and parenting his five children (who say he's famous, and have asked "if they can tell their friends" about the State Fair butter gig). His commissioned bronzework has been installed throughout the world, including a tribute to fallen park rangers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

"I got my art degree, and then I went back for an industrial tech degree so I could teach shop and art classes," he said, explaining how art and teaching overlap. "I just think I learned so much from showing kids how to do [art]—breaking things down step by step and showing them."

Then three years ago, Theresa Reps at Midwest Dairy invited Kulzer to audition to be Christensen's eventual replacement as the fair's reigning butter sculptor. "She said, 'Come on down the day before the fair, we'll give you a block of butter, you can carve it, and [we'll] see how you are.' They put me in a refrigerator with this 90-pound block of butter and some photos of a person." When he emerged, Kulzer had a decent semblance of a Midwest Dairy employee (who periodically popped into the fridge for a few minutes to sit for her portrait) and a newfound appreciation for what Christensen has done for nearly 50 years.

Kulzer practices churning buttery resin into art.

COURTESY GERARD KULZER

"It was enlightening, because you don't realize what Linda goes through. She is sitting in that freezing cold butter booth—it is 34 to 40 degrees." It also rotates very slowly, giving gawkers a 360-degree view of the spectacle.

Midwest Dairy liked enough of what they saw—in product and spirit—to invite Kulzer back the next year. During phase two of his apprenticeship, the artists worked in that fishbowl together, tag-teaming a portrait. But this time, they split that butter face right down the middle, as spectators pressed their noses to the glass.

In the butter booth, Kulzer says Christensen showed him "how she attacks these things, how she works. I would do [one] side of the sculpture. So she did the left eye, and then I'd do the right eye and outside of the mouth." The results *could* have been nothing short of grotesque, but somehow their joint effort looked like a coherent sculpture. "It didn't look like one person did one side and another did another side."

Of course, the idea wasn't for Kulzer to step into Christensen's giant shoes just yet. But knowing that his mentor will be available for virtual guidance makes these 12 days in August seem a little less daunting. "It will be very helpful to have her there, kind of watching what's going on, and talking with the Princess, and talking with me.... But it's not the same—you know even this past year trying to teach online distance learning—it's not the same when you can't just reach over and touch the clay or touch, in this case, the butter," says the teacher. "Um, a picture is worth a thousand words, and actions are worth a million."

After working in so many artistic mediums, Kulzer has found that clay translates most closely to butter, but not precisely. Kulzer sticks to clay-cutting tools for the job, but uses a designated set for butter, to keep things sanitary ("because people want to eat the butter"). Butter also has a subtle grain to it—like wood "and ice cream"—so it might cut smoothly on one side, only to shard badly on the other. This takes some getting used to, and he wants to do his best.

"It's not just the sculpting, but as an ambassador for Midwest Dairy, I feel like I've got to do my best to make them shine, because we're representing all the farmers in the whole state of Minnesota," says Kulzner, of the pressure he's putting on himself. "I'm not just a sculptor for the State Fair event; I'm representing Midwest Dairy and all the farmers out there. I'm showing the fruits of their labor, their hard work."

In preparation for the unexpected coming to fruition this year, Kulzer did say he's been doing a little practicing in the offseason, including accepting some commissioned work in butter. One job involved a former Princess Kay of the Milky Way, whom Christensen had sculpted; her highness had been keeping her royal likeness in the freezer ever since.

"Maybe [for] five years?" guesses Kulzer.

"She told Linda she was gonna have her sculpt her future husband when she gets married someday. And, uh, so that day came," says Kulzer. "Linda just passed that on to me." Though the bride was happy with the result, Kulzer (ever his worst critic) was mortified. "I see the pictures from her wedding, and her husband's head is gigantic."

Only by doing does one realize that a short hairstyle means carving away much less butter in equal sized blocks, thereby leaving a bigger canvas for the face. A teacher to his core, Kulzer says aspiring butter artists need only remember: "Practice, practice, practice. No matter what the physical skill, you need to practice. You'll get better and better."

Consider this an invitation to grab the nearest hunk of butter and get to work, turning it into something more beautiful than it already is. We've been doing it for eons... just each in our own, unique ways.

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BRYAN FRANK

BLACK LIVES MATTER, MINNEAPOLIS

Artists come together to create a beautiful mural

BY EMILY CASSEL

Last Saturday, the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery brought together 16 artists to paint "Black Lives Matter" on Plymouth Avenue in north Minneapolis.

Here's what each told City Pages about the intention behind their letter in the massive street mural.

B: Sean Garrison Phillips

"The main image will be black roses and a couple of doves. The black rose is a metaphor for Black folks in this country and how [our country] wants to treat us—it either wants to love us or loathe us, and we always get caught in the middle. A rose is a rose; the flower of all flowers. One minute it's beautiful, the next minute, prick your finger, now you're pissed off. That's kind of where we are now in this current time. We've been there for a while, but especially right now. Now we need to show our other side of being a rose."

L: Timi Bliss

"It is James Baldwin. Enough said, right? Transcendent, finger on the pulse of what's happening in the Black community, then and now. So he's gotta be commemorated."

A: Beverly Tipton Hammond

"I want to reflect that children are our future, but we need to be educated about our history. Because most of the schools—we didn't learn at all about our history. When the slaves were first freed, they didn't learn anything about where they came from, that we were kings and queens."

C: Kelly Brown

"My idea was really just to create a cool pattern, something really colorful. I stuck with a warm orange palette. I chose this approach because it's simple enough—to try to create a good dimension with it, to make it pop—but then looking around to see what everybody else does, trying to make sure that the colors coordinate with some of the stuff around it."

K: Peyton Scott Russell

"I chose a contrasting achromatic color scheme of black-white-gray to fill in the letter K. It's a representation of my biracial background and a symbolic gesture of joining the races together."

L: Brittany Moore

"I do abstract stuff, mostly. In painting I do mostly abstract, but when I draw I do pattern, geometry, super-straight-line, ruler-type stuff. I'm just doing my artistic style on the L. I don't really plan that much, with the way that I create. Every time I try to plan it always changes anyway, so I don't really care about planning... that's basically what I do. My approach is always natural. It's never a plan or a stressful thing."

I: Donna Ray

"When people die, they come back, I believe. They never leave us. Their spirits always come around, they talk to us. The red-tailed cardinal is communicating with the hawk, telling the hawk different things to tell us.... [The hawk] is flying around and dropping little messages, saying, 'Daddy changed the world.' Because remember, George Floyd's daughter said it two or three times. And I could never get that out of my mind."

V: Andrew Hammond

"It's voting season, so I wanted to hit on that, furthering the notion of Black lives mattering. Society has it set up like there's some contention between us with the flag. We've been in this nation for 400 years, there's no contention. I'm Native American, Native Black American. That flag represents me as well."

E: Christopheraaron Deanes

"Right now what I'm painting is symbols that represent language. There's a coding of language, the absence of colloquialistic voice that exists because of African Americans migrating and being enslaved. And the robbing of history and culture and race and religion and language, and transforming that into an American or a European language. The colloquialistic language which people call slang is the voice of who we are. I don't want us to forget where we came from."

S: Melodee Strong

"So I got the S, and I immediately thought,

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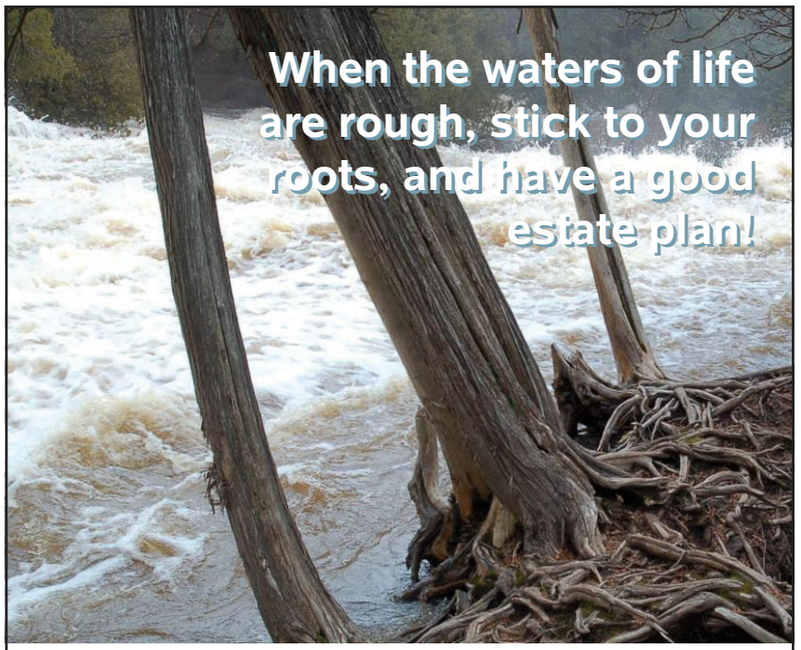

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like, Superman. And then I thought: Super Women of social justice. So my letter is basically dedicated to the feminists of the civil rights movements—they're activists. I'm going to have Malala on there, Maxine Waters. I have BLM at the top to represent the three women who started the Black Lives Matter movement, and then I have stars coming off of that. Three will be dedicated to three mamas—Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, and Mike Brown's mom—because they are now continuing the movement and the change through civil service because they're all running for office or have received it. And then I'm going to have Philando Castile's girlfriend on one of the stars."

M: Christopher E. Harrison

"This piece, I made very biomorphic bodies. I use these figures, I call them 'whomans'—w-h-o—like, who are these people? Who are these figures? The idea was to make present Black and brown bodies—even though they're not detailed, they're entities, they're symbolic. They're based on artwork I'd seen on an artist residency in Senegal, Africa. So it'll be these little bodies, and in between them there will be African symbols."

A: Reggie LeFlore

"I'm originally from Omaha, Nebraska; I moved up here in 2015. When George Floyd's murder happened, protests were happening all over the place, and in Omaha, some things got a little out of hand. There was this young kid, James Scurlock, who was murdered by an ex-marine/Trump supporter. It's a really tragic story. And the murderer... he's free on the streets. All charges dropped; there's not going to be justice. [This mural] an interesting opportunity that came up, because I've just been so pissed off about what happened. This type of murder doesn't make national headlines... I wanted to use this as a platform to sort of amplify that, as a portrait-based artist."

T: DeSean Hollie

"I'm doing basically a color contrast. When you do graffiti, you want to think about the colors you're going to use, and you want to think about how that fits together. The beauty of graffiti is you can do whatever you want, basically. The thought process behind this was: Do multiple colors and blend it a little bit, and then have this letter pop. Do the shine, have that bling on it. These are all simple little things, but if you're smart about how you're putting it on here, your stuff can look really great."

T: Broderick Poole

"I was one of the last people to select a letter. It was either T or V. So I chose T. [My letter is] kind of a mix of some of the art I've done in the past, bringing awareness to some of the situations that have put us in tougher places.... We've been discriminated against in so many different areas for a thousand years. So I'm highlighting some of that in the volcano, and up top I'm gonna put some things that can kind of help us out in the future."

E: Lissa Karpeh

"This piece is focused on: Black education matters. So I started with the apple; it's symbolic for education, symbolic for knowledge, and also the books. And then Black liberation: really coming together, having conversations, protesting, and also remembering that our roots go back to Africa."

R: Kenneth Caldwell

"The image is a self-portrait, but it's an image of my son. It's how I see myself and how I saw myself as a kid—me watching my dad and now my son watching me. The piece is called The Day Dreamer. It's an image of him looking up into the sky imagining what his next creation is going to be. It's about creation, building, and the innocence of a child. He's an artist, I tried to expose him to as many different arts as possible—he plays guitar, he's really into sports, and he loves to paint as well." CP

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

ARIES (March 21–April 19): "The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day." Aries playwright Samuel Beckett made that observation, and now I'm passing it on to you as you glide into an extra-creative phase of your astrological cycle. I hope you will regard Beckett's idea as an open-ended encouragement to improvise and experiment. May it rouse you to brainstorm about novel possibilities. May it inspire you to explore fresh trends you could launch. May it mobilize you to imagine the new worlds you might *Big Bang* into existence.

TAURUS (April 20–May 20): Author Diane Ackerman tells us, "So often loneliness comes from being out of touch with parts of oneself." That's the kind of loneliness I worry you may be susceptible to right now, Taurus. You're a bit out of touch with aspects of your psyche that are crucial for you to include in your total sense of self. You've been neglecting to nurture certain soulful qualities that keep you healthy and wise. Please note: It won't be useful to try to find those parts of you in other people; you will have to locate them in your own depths. Here's the good news: The coming weeks will be an excellent time to do just that.

GEMINI (May 21–June 20): "Someone ought to do it, but why should I?" Author and activist Annie Besant identified that sentence as the motto of people who are moral cowards: those who know about an injustice but do nothing to address it. Very few of us have completely avoided that behavior. Most of us, including me, have now and then chosen to serve our need for comfort instead of standing up against corruption or unfairness. But I think it's more important than usual that you Geminis don't engage in such moral cowardice now. More depends on your integrity and bravery than you realize.

CANCER (June 21–July 22): Born in 1936, Cancerian author and activist June Jordan was a black feminist bisexual born to Jamaican immigrant parents. When she was growing up, her father beat her and her mother committed suicide. Later, she raised her child alone as a single mother. Despite the challenges she faced, she published 28 books, won numerous awards, and wielded significant influence. How did she do it? She was a highly evolved Cancerian in the sense that she put a priority on treating herself well. "I must undertake to love myself and to respect myself as though my very life depends upon self-love and self-respect," she testified. I'd like to make that your keynote for the rest of 2020. Your task is to achieve June Jordan–levels of self-care.

LEO (July 23–Aug. 22): "How can I communicate to wild bunnies that I am their ally?" asked a Twitter blogger named Ghost Girl. That question is a good place to start my oracle for you. In the coming weeks, I think you'll be wise to meditate on how to enhance your relationship with all kinds of wild things: animals, people, weather, landscapes, and your own exotic thoughts and fantasies. In my opinion, you will upgrade your intelligence and well-being by increasing your access to influences that don't necessarily play by conventional rules and that draw their energy from primal sources.

VIRGO (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): It's never too late to have a rebellious adolescence—hopefully bigger and better and smarter than any you've had before. And according to my analysis, now would be a favorable time to get started. Is there any stuffy authority you'd be wise to flout? Any dumb and oppressive conventions you would benefit from breaking? Any stale old traditions you're primed to ignore so you can create some lively new traditions? In my estimation, you will generate good fortune for yourself if you try some benevolent mischief and creative experiments.

LIBRA (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): Your word of power for the coming weeks is *ubuntu*, a Zulu term meaning "I am because we are" or "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity." Nobel Prize–winning theologian Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes, "A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished." I hope that between now and August 25, Libra, you will put *ubuntu* at the center of everything you do. Make it an intensely practical practice.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): "The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them," says Scorpio-born Liberian politician Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. "If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough." I trust you've arrived at this realization on your own in the past few weeks. And I hope you have audaciously expanded and supercharged your dreams so that they do indeed surpass your current ability to accomplish them. If you have not yet done this daring work, please attend to it now. If you have done it, move on to the next step: making definite plans to acquire the power and resources necessary to achieve your new, improved dreams.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): "The soul should always stand ajar," wrote Sagittarian poet Emily Dickinson, "That if the heaven inquire, / He will not be obliged to wait, / Or shy of troubling her." I'm confident that this will be a fertile meditation for you in the coming weeks. So what does it mean? By "heaven," I assume Dickinson meant marvelous interventions, sacred revelations, and lucky accidents—and maybe also soulful invitations, out-of-the-blue opportunities, and supernatural breakthroughs. What do you think, Sagittarius? What can you do to make your soul ajar for phenomena like those?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): "Everything is complicated," wrote poet Wallace Stevens. "If that were not so, life and poetry and everything else would be a bore." I agree! And therefore, I conclude, you should shed any resentment you might feel for the fact that our world is a crazy tangle of mystifying and interesting stories. Drop any wish that life will stop being so fascinatingly messy and confusingly intriguing. Instead, why not celebrate the deep riddles? And revel in the intriguing complexity? And give holy thanks for the paradoxical beauty? Everything I just said should prepare you well for the next four weeks.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): You'll be extra sensitive to stimuli in the coming weeks. Every little event will touch you more intensely than usual. Every perception will flow into you with an unusually strong potential to move you and influence you. That's why I think you should be vigilantly self-protective. Erect a psychic shield around yourself. Make sure your boundaries are firm and clear. Affirm your unshakable commitment to deflecting vibes that aren't of use to you and welcoming vibes that will enhance your well-being.

PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): Actress Gwyneth Paltrow founded Goop, a company that markets exotic, expensive health treatments. She claims that far-infrared gemstone therapy and crystal-based sound-healing baths will dissolve your negativity. Allowing bees to sting your scars will supposedly cause the scars to fade. Drinking "sex juice," a blend of watermelon and alkaline water, will enhance your libido. The "collagen martini," which is a mix of vodka, vermouth, olive juice, and collagen peptides, will smooth your skin's wrinkles. I'm favorably disposed to you taking strong actions to improve your well-being in the coming weeks, Pisces, but I recommend that you try cheaper, more reliable modalities than those Paltrow recommends. Like what? Ample sleep and good food, for starters, along with fun exercise, time in nature, enjoyable meditation sessions, and tender expressions of love.

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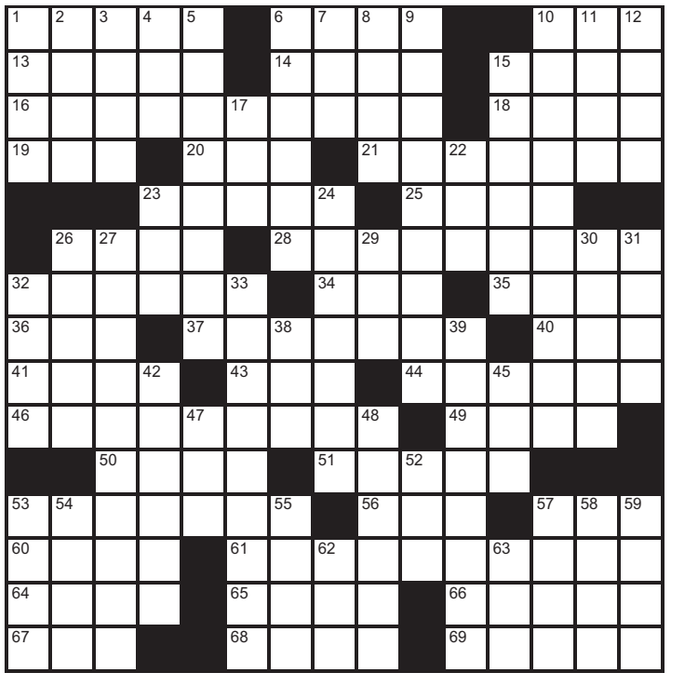

THE ALMIGHTY HOLLER

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

1 Good Charlotte guitarist Madden
6 Concrete ___
10 Eastern philosophical topic
13 Yacht's spot
14 Read with extreme interest
15 "Take this"
16 Larynx affected by 37-Across?
18 French 101 approvals
19 "Babe"
20 Vegetable garden tool
21 One might include a toilet brush and a soap dish
23 Did a balletic jump
25 Sweater material
26 Carp family fish
28 Buzz felt on Halloween
32 Pertaining to an inscribed pillar
34 Champagne sea
35 "Grand Ole" place
36 Last name that sounds like a conjunction
37 Invulnerability achieved by a cheat code, ... and an alternate title to this puzzle
40 Heart spot?
41 Coach's challenge item
43 "Bad ___" (2019 #1 hit)
44 "I'm drowning here"
46 Break in the program
49 Neat and prepared
50 Epps of "Fatal Affair"
51 Intrinsically
53 Little streams
56 Prefix with scholasticism
57 "Pew pew"
60 "Splendor in the Grass" Oscar winner William
61 Speaking affected by 37-Across?
64 Plenitude
65 From miles away
66 Birmingham Alabaman, for short
67 "Greetings, Brutus!"
68 Old Memorex, e.g.
69 She said "We Can Do It!"

Down

1 "Why not ___?"
2 Smart home hub
3 Bright and shiny, as colors
4 Olive container
5 Iced up
6 Spend everything events
7 John of Manchester United
8 Beirut resident
9 Prizes that Beyoncé has the most of, 31
10 Like a mouth affected by 37-Across?
11 Toledo's lake
12 Smart home temperature controller
15 Cry during December
17 All the rage
22 Craggy hill
23 National Grilling Mo.
24 Make a prototype of something
26 Pasting command
27 Licker affected by 37-Across?
29 Political opening?
30 Covered in dirt
31 Influencer's field
32 Easily bullied
33 "I hear you loud and clear"
38 The band Surfaces, e.g.
39 Has dinner at a friend's place
42 Gin-and-lime drink
45 Compete
47 Whitman of "Good Girls"
48 Temple security?
52 Legal thing
53 Latvia's capital
54 Sch. near the Strip
55 Netflix and chill spot
57 Goes fast
58 Trendy berry
59 Comedian Holmes
62 Bust some rhymes

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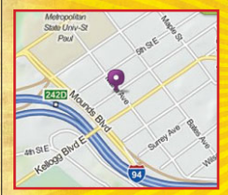

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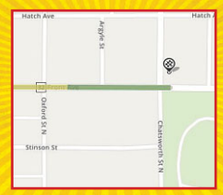

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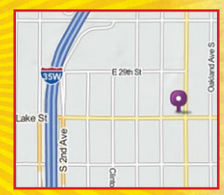

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Is long-term monogamy even possible?

Is it terrible to believe you can still have a truly monogamous and loving relationship with one partner after 20 years? Or can we walk into a relationship knowing that within those decades of being together situations like infidelity or being attracted to another is completely unavoidable? And if we acknowledge that in some cases it's truly unavoidable, should we mentally prepare ourselves for this possibility during our "monogamous" stage? Early on in dating?

HOPELESSLY OPTIMISTIC PERSON ENQUIRES

Dan Savage

Be prepared.

Knowing what we do about infidelity and how common it is over the course of long-term relationships, HOPE, it's a good idea to have a conversation early on about what you'll do if and/or when one and/or the other of you should cheat years or decades later. It's best for this convo to happen at the tail end of the infatuation stage but before you've made any sort of formal commitment—you know, after you've had your first fight but still at that stage when the thought of ever wanting to fuck someone else seems ridiculous. Committing at that point to at least trying to work through an infidelity doesn't guarantee the relationship will survive and it doesn't obligate you to remain in the relationship. But it ups the chances the relationship will survive an infidelity that it could and perhaps should survive.

When it comes to cheating... some types are worse than others. There are differences in degree. If you found out your husband fucked your sister on your wedding night, well, that's probably not something you'll be able to forgive. But an instantly regretted one-off on a business trip (remember those?), or a prolonged affair after 20 years and two kids when both partners long ago started taking their sexual connection for granted and allowed it to wither? That's something you can work past, and are likelier to work past if you agreed to at least try to work past it before the kids and the taking for granted and the business trips.

The culture encourages us to see cheating as a relationship-extinction-level event—an unforgivable betrayal, something no relationship can survive. Which seems nuts when you pause to consider just how common cheating is. Defining cheating as always unforgivable sets up for failure otherwise good and loving relationships that might be able to survive an infidelity.

It's not at all trivial, but it's something a relationship can survive, HOPE. And if the culture told us that instead, more relationships that should survive infidelities would—I hope you're sitting down—actually survive infidelities. The truth is, many relationships don't just survive infidelities but wind up thriving in the wake of the disclosure or exposure of an affair because the healing process brings the couple closer together. (This is not a good reason to have an affair, of course, nor is it the reason why anyone has ever had an affair.)

Now to quickly answer your first questions...

Yes, it is possible for two people to remain monogamous for 20 years. It can be done—of course it can—but there are lots of people out there who think they've done it but are mistaken. Some people who think they've been in successfully monogamous relationships for 20 years have been cheated on—or they themselves have done something their partners might regard as cheating—and the one-off infidelity or the ongoing affair or the happy endings were never exposed or disclosed.

Your partner is going to find other people attractive—and not in 20 years. Today, right now, your partner is going to lay eyes on someone else they find attractive, HOPE, just as you will probably lay eyes—but only eyes—on someone else you find attractive. Making a monogamous commitment doesn't mean you don't wanna fuck other people, it means you will *refrain* from fucking other people. If the lie we're told about love and attraction were true—if being in love with someone left you incapable of finding someone else attractive—we wouldn't need to make monogamous commitments. We wouldn't need to promise to not fuck anyone or extract that promise from someone else if being in love rendered us incapable of even noticing how hot our barista is.

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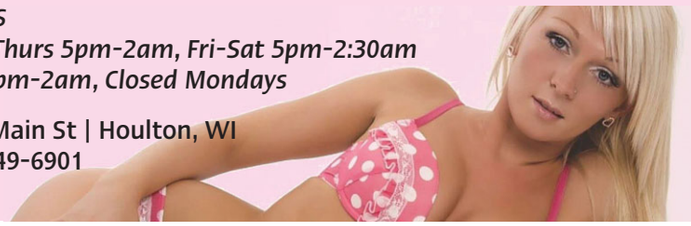

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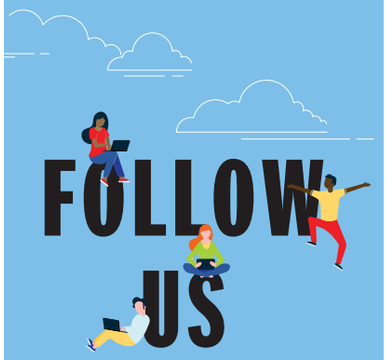

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